5.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

5.1 Coordination with Federal and State Agencies

The Department coordinated the project study with many local, state and federal agencies which have varying degrees of jurisdiction and expertise concerning the area's natural resources and the socio-economic outcomes of building a four-lane highway.

5.1.1 Scoping Process

A formal scoping meeting was held on September 23, 1993 at the Department District Office in Dixon, Illinois. Representatives of the following organizations attended the meeting:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Illinois Historical Preservation Agency
Illinois Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Department of Conservation
University of Illinois (Archaeological Survey Program)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Illinois Department of Transportation Central Office, Bureau of Design and Environment (Department)
Illinois Department of Transportation District 2 Office, Program Development (Department)
The Louis Berger Group, Inc. (Berger) (Consultants)
Johnson, Depp & Quisenberry (JDQ) (Consultants)

Attendees were provided a scoping meeting package of information several days prior to the meeting. The following items were contained in the package:

1. A draft agenda for the meeting
2. An 11”x17” color map of the project area
3. A draft of the “Notice of Intent” for the project
4. A draft of the “Purpose and Need” section being prepared for the project’s Environmental Impact Statement
5. A copy of the press release initiating the project’s initial public involvement
6. A copy of a brief report on the results of a telephone survey on citizen attitudes concerning the project
7. A copy of the project’s Citizens Guide for Public Involvement

In addition to coordination and public involvement, areas of concern and focus discussed at the meeting included (a) sensitive archaeological resources and historical structures, (b) wetlands and wetland mitigation, (c) the viability of the old Scales Mound Corridor, (d) erosion and sedimentation, especially at river crossings, (e) riparian corridors, (f) forest fragmentation and wildlife travel corridors, (g) endangered species and natural areas, and (h) agricultural lands and operations.

The representative of the USEPA said he was satisfied with the environmental study methodologies as proposed. Minutes of the meeting are included in Appendix B.

One of the major contributions to the scoping process was the project's public involvement program. Throughout the project study, the public had considerable influence on what alternate alignments and what analyses were conducted. The Work Groups and Advisory Council in particular, through development of their own assessment criteria, sought out specific information of concern to citizens in the region and compared alignments and design features from their own perspectives. Using the results of the Department's studies – some at the request of the Advisory Council - and their own investigations, they were able to bring their value systems into the study process.

5.1.2 Bimonthly Coordination Meetings

Bimonthly coordination meetings were held between the Department, its consultants and the FHWA to discuss and analyze key issues for alternate location and to dismiss alternates which did not meet the purpose and need of the project. Such meetings were held throughout the project beginning on June 15, 1994.

Attendees at these meetings varied and included representatives of the Department, the FHWA, the Illinois Natural History Survey, the Illinois State Geological Survey, Berger, JDQ and other consultants.

Issues discussed at the bimonthly coordination meetings included: eliminating a southern alignment between Elizabeth and Stockton following an old railroad grade; public involvement structure with Work Groups and an Advisory Council; purpose and need for the project study; alignment modification to minimize agricultural impact and avoid environmental hot spots, including archaeological sites and rattlesnake habitat; interchange locations; studying the Snipe Hollow alignment; origination and destination study; system continuity; the existing alignment as a project expressway alternate; and citizen interest group (Freeway Watch Committee, JD/S Four-Lane 20 Association) concerns.

Also discussed were crash data in relation to an expressway and a freeway, a rest area along a new alignment, endangered and threatened species identification, prime farmland, reducing cuts and fills, bypass construction, housing developments and golf course construction near Galena Territory, waivers from grade standards, a tunnel variation for the Irish Hollow alternate, engineering considerations for each alignment, bicycle path location, dismissal of the Snipe Hollow alignment, Tapley Woods natural area status and relation to the expressway alternate, location of an Upper Irish Hollow alternate, closing the Scales Mound corridor study as an option, and technical report status.

Berger also held periodic coordination meetings throughout the project study among its own consultant staff, and with the Department, local government agencies, local homeowner organizations, agricultural interests and the public to define and communicate alignment location issues and refine alignment locations.

5.1.3 NEPA/404 Meetings

During the early evaluation of the alternate alignments, the Department held two NEPA/404 meetings: one on April 29 and 30, 1996, and one on September 29 and 30, 1997, to refine the purpose and need of the project and to determine which alternates would be carried forward in the study.

The federal and state agencies that participated in the NEPA/404 Coordination Meetings included the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

At the first NEPA/404 Coordination Meeting in 1996, information was provided to agencies to assist them in building consensus regarding the purpose and need for the proposed improvements. Data was presented on traffic growth and projected traffic in the project area indicating that the existing and projected design hourly volumes exceed the Department's criteria for warrants for a four-lane highway. Crash data was reviewed, and it was stated that existing U.S. Route 20 does not meet current design standards.

Regarding service to local communities, the Department identified that there is a mixing of local traffic (including farm vehicles) with high-speed traffic on the existing two-lane, creating conflicts. System continuity was discussed, showing a need for this final 80-kilometer (50-mile)± length of two-lane highway to be upgraded to provide a four-lane from Chicago to Waterloo, Iowa and beyond. As a result of the meeting, the FHWA generally concurred with the purpose and need of the project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources deferred their opinion on the engineering need to the Federal Highway Administration.

At the second NEPA/404 Coordination Meeting in 1997, the objective was to obtain concurrence on both the purpose and need document and the range of alternatives being studied. FHWA and the Department's Central Office had previously agreed on concurrence. USEPA asked that the purpose and need document give the existing or future level of service (LOS) by segment. The agency also questioned if the public desires a four-lane highway and if there is a preference for any particular alignment. Berger responded that there is general consensus that a four-lane highway is needed and that there does not appear to be a clear alignment preference.

Criteria for dismissing an alternate were discussed. USEPA stated that they view the alignment with the least amount of wetland impact as the environmentally preferred alternate, and that if LOS for the existing two-lane facility is inadequate that they would concur in the range of alternates being studied. Other agencies attending the meeting concurred on the alternates to be carried forward.

On April 19, 2002, the Department held an additional NEPA/404 Coordination Meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to review the status of the project and public involvement program and to present Alternate 2 as the Preferred Alternate for consideration and discussion. At this meeting, the Department also discussed the status of the environmental documentation and the recommendations of the Advisory Council as to their preferred alternate.

At this meeting, the discussion focused on the Preferred Alternate (Alternate 2) as recommended by the Department and Advisory Council. The Department presented its findings that the Preferred Alternate (Alternate 2) represented the least negative impacts on the environment and that it best preserved prime and important farmland, best facilitated local travel needs and involved fewer interchanges and bridges, thus reducing impacts and costs.

The Department stated that based on the engineering and environmental analyses conducted to date, the Long Hollow Freeway Alignment with the Simmons Mound variation was the Preferred Alternate. Although FHWA and the cooperating and participating agencies stated that this particular alternate seemed like the logical preferred alignment, in their opinion, they deferred

approval of Alternate 2 as the Preferred Alternate until they had an opportunity to review the PDEIS. However, it was agreed that in the interim, the DEIS currently being prepared would identify Alternate 2 as the Preferred Alternate.

On April 28, 2003, the third NEPA/404 Coordination Meeting was held. The purpose of this meeting was to achieve concurrence on the Preferred Alternate alignment (Long Hollow Freeway with South Simmons Mound variation). Data was presented on the Alternate 2 alignment and the environmental impacts, specifically agriculture, cultural, upland forest, habitat fragmentation, threatened and endangered species, special waste, stream crossings, floodplains, wetlands, and mitigation. As a result of the meeting, each participating agency concurred with the Alternate 2 alignment as the Preferred Alternate.

Minutes of the above coordination meetings and the lists of attendees are included in Appendix C.

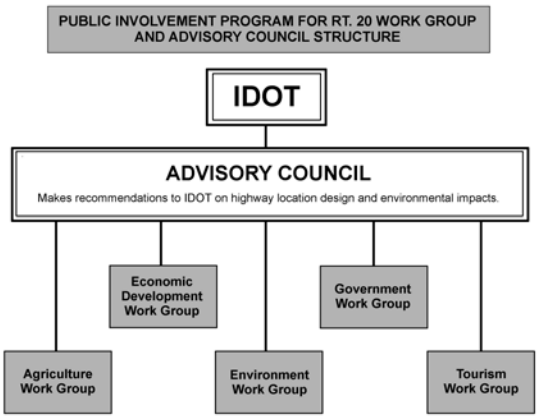
5.2 Public Involvement

The need for an improved U.S. Route 20 has been discussed by the citizens of Jo Daviess and Stephenson Counties for decades. As early as the 1960s the Department conducted a study on a potential four-lane highway corridor in the northern portion of the two counties. Later, the focus shifted to a potential corridor closer to existing U.S. Route 20 to better serve the needs of growing communities.

In 1985 some 13,000 citizens petitioned the Illinois Governor to build a four-lane highway. In addition, local civic and business leaders lobbied federal funding sources for the dollars to complete an environmental impact statement and a location design study. Thus, when the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 was passed, funding for environmental impact and location design studies for a new four-lane U.S. Route 20 corridor was included. With such long-standing interest among citizens of northwest Illinois for a four-lane highway, the Department determined that a strong public involvement initiative would be part of the engineering design and environmental impact study.

The public involvement initiative included a progressive design and an extensive application of public involvement tools. This initiative provided early and ongoing opportunities for the public, the Department, and its consultants to work in a collaborative setting. Public input resulted in major changes and adjustments to highway alignment alternates throughout the study. A blend of traditional and innovative public involvement tools was utilized to initiate and maintain an active dialogue with affected and interested citizens across the two-county region that encompassed the project.

The initial challenge in developing the public involvement initiative was how to effectively involve several thousand citizens in a project traversing over fifty miles of rural and urban area. A Work Group/Advisory Council structure was designed where agriculture, economic development, tourism, environment, and government interests were represented. The core of public involvement activity occurred through the Work Groups/Advisory Council structure. To maintain a dialogue that would be fluid and efficient with ongoing participants, yet allow newcomers to participate, a variety of tools were used. Dialogue was facilitated through the use of kiosks, audio-video presentations, an 800 telephone number, and newsletters.



Citizen evaluation of government program options - in this case highway alternates - has historically been a difficult part of the public involvement process. Sorting through technical data and subjective feelings about what is important to the community often results in disagreements between citizens and government. To help deal with this difficulty, an evaluation system was used whereby citizens developed and weighed their own criteria. Unlike most numerical evaluation systems, this system incorporated the use of technical data with citizen concerns.

In June 1993, the Department held its first public information meeting to ask the public to become a partner in the four-lane study and planning process. Citizens were asked to join one of five Work Groups depending on their primary interest, ie., agriculture, economic development, environment, government or tourism, to help the Department assess the impacts of a four-lane highway on the region. A 10-member Advisory Council was formed including the chairperson and one other representative of each Work Group to develop a consensus or regional perspective on which alignment(s) would best serve the needs of the citizens in northwest Illinois.

Individual Work Group Meetings were held periodically throughout the project study to discuss the findings of the engineering design and socio-economic and environmental studies being carried out by the Department and its consultants in their area of interest.

When new information from technical studies became available, the Department held Joint Work Group Meetings so that each Work Group would have timely access to information.

Advisory Council Meetings were held when public involvement procedures or project study policy direction affected all the Work Groups.

County-wide Public Information Meetings were held periodically to allow the public at large to review and comment on the preliminary alternate locations and associated impacts.

All meetings were open to the public and the news media and were publicized in local newspaper and broadcast outlets.

5.2.1 U.S. Route 20 Work Groups

Over the course of the project study, each Work Group selected criteria for assessing the impacts of each four-lane highway alternate being evaluated. Each Work Group weighted each of its criteria, and then applied technical study data and/or a values scale to assess the impacts

of each alternate on its particular area of interest. For some criteria, an impact assessment was derived by using pairwise comparisons of each alternate to all other alternates and their variations.

After data from the Department's technical studies were used to quantify each criterion, each Work Group developed an impacts summary matrix, which provided alternate preference scores for each alternate. The alternate with the least impacts would have the lowest score.

Following is a list of each Work Group's criteria, selected and weighted by its members, and a summary of findings regarding the impacts of a new four-lane expressway or freeway. For each Work Group, the two lowest alternate preference scores (alternates with the least impacts) are identified.

5.2.1.1 Agriculture

Agriculture Work Group ranking of criteria to minimize the impact of a four-lane expressway or freeway:

* minimize farm-splitting resulting in irregularly shaped and landlocked parcels 27.9%
* minimize disruption of local road networks and access to fields, markets and suppliers 21.7%
* limit loss of prime and important farmland acreage 19.5%
* avoid displacement of farm homes and other working structures 15.8%
* limit the mixing of farm traffic with commercial and tourist traffic 15.1%

Agriculture Work Group Summary Findings:
Top Two Alternate Preferences
Alternate #1 (Score: 7.4) Longhollow Freeway/North Simmons Mound
Alternate #2 (Score: 7.7) Longhollow Freeway/South Simmons Mound

See Appendix G for the detailed Agriculture Work Group report, including its matrix of data/values ranking by alternate and the resulting alternate preference scores.

5.2.1.2 Economic Development

Economic Development Work Group ranking of criteria to minimize the impact of a four-lane expressway or freeway:

* provide for the safest route possible for business-related transportation 28.9%
* retain the greatest number of businesses and jobs 24.4%
* maximize the creation of new businesses and jobs 24.4%
* separate the local business traffic from through traffic as much as possible 22.2%

Economic Work Group Summary Findings:
Top Two Alternate Preferences
Alternate #5 (Score: 7.4) Irish Hollow Freeway/Tunnel/North Simmons Mound
Alternate #6 (Score: 7.4) Irish Hollow Freeway/Tunnel/South Simmons Mound

No major difference was recorded for preference scores ranging from 7.4 to 7.5 of alternates ranked third through tenth.

See Appendix G for the detailed Economic Work Group report, including its matrix of data/values ranking by alternate and the resulting alternate preference scores.

5.2.1.3 Environment

Environment Work Group ranking of criteria to minimize the impact of a four-lane expressway or freeway:

* preserve natural areas, especially large continuous tracts (woodlands, wetlands, prairies and natural hollows, rivers, lakes, streams and natural springs and natural drainageways; geological features such as sink holes, rock outcroppings, mines, mounds; nature preserves, conservation areas)	31.5%
* avoid, measure and minimize pollution (surface and underground water quality; silt and contamination; water runoff, air/smog, visual, noise pollution; night light pollution)	24.0%
* protect endangered and threatened species and their essential habitats	19.5%
* preserve scenic areas, vistas and natural contours (views - open space and unusual terrain for residents and tourism)	13.0%
* preserve the uniqueness of the region (driftless area - no glacial activity)	12.0%

Environment Work Group Summary Findings
Top Two Alternate Preferences
Alternate #1 (Score: 6.1) Longhollow Freeway/North Simmons Mound
Alternate #2 (Score: 6.1) Longhollow Freeway/South Simmons Mound

See Appendix G for the detailed Environment Work Group report, including its matrix of data/values ranking by variation and the resulting alternate preference scores.

5.2.1.4 Government

Government Work Group ranking of criteria to minimize the impact of a four-lane expressway or freeway:

* access to communities, including the distance from the center of each community along U.S. Route 20 to its nearest interchange	25.4%
* impacts on emergency services (EMT, fire and police)	22.9%
* impacts on local government economics (tax revenues, property value changes)	18.1%
* increase in local maintenance of existing roadways and overpasses	17.1%
* compatibility with current land use and future land use plans	16.5%

Government Work Group Summary Findings:
Top Two Alternate Preferences
Alternate #9 (Score: 6.2) Upper Irish Hollow Freeway/South Simmons Mound
Alternate #7 (Score: 6.4) Upper Irish Hollow Freeway/North Simmons Mound

See Appendix G for the detailed Government Work Group report, including its matrix of data/values ranking by alternate and the resulting alternate preference scores.

5.2.1.5 Tourism

Tourism Work Group ranking of criteria to minimize the impact of a four-lane expressway or freeway:

* provide easy access to and preservation of present local businesses, especially those on U.S. Route 20	22.0%
* preserve tranquility, scenic views and unique terrain	20.3%
* encourage recreational tourism in entire area: biking, hiking, skiing, golfing, antique and specialty shopping	18.6%
* service transportation needs of tourists and local population	15.3%
* preserve historical character and unique local charm	11.9%
* preserve wildlife for recreational tourism; bird watching, hunting and fishing	11.9%

Tourism Work Group Summary Findings:
Top Two Alternate Preferences
Alternate #11 (Score: 7.2) Expressway/South Eleroy
Alternate #12 (Score: 7.3) Expressway/North Eleroy

At the Advisory Council level of analysis, Tourism Work Group officers noted that their criteria had been evaluated under the assumption that the expressway alternate would utilize much of the existing highway 20 roadway. Later in the study, it became apparent that much of the old highway, built in the 1920s, could not be used in new four-lane highway construction due to antiquated and unsafe design features for today's higher traffic volumes. Thus, the Tourism Work Group ultimately reached the conclusion that one of the freeway alternates might better serve the region.

See Appendix G for the detailed Tourism Work Group report, including its matrix of data/values ranking by alternate and the resulting alternate preference scores.

5.2.2 U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council

To formulate a regional perspective on the impacts of a new freeway or expressway and to determine which alternate alignment would best serve the region, the Advisory Council reviewed each of the Work Groups' final reports and preference scores.

In addition, the Advisory Council identified other factors they wanted to address which were not being analyzed by the Work Groups. They identified and weighted the following criteria:

* traffic safety	30.4
* future highway needs	16.6
* construction under traffic	15.5
* local highway system	15.5
* cost to maintain	11.9
* cost to build	10.1

Data from the Department's technical studies were used to provide measures for the criteria and determine impacts for each alternate. The Advisory Council members also decided to discuss, qualitatively, regional economic development issues, build versus no-build highway alternatives and highway system continuity. The Advisory Council's analysis of these factors is included in their report to the Department.

In working toward reaching a consensus on a preferred alternate, the Advisory Council focused on regional perspectives, Work Group findings and the evaluation of their own criteria. As a result, the Advisory Council concluded that while the expressway alternates incurred the lowest cost of all alternates, the overall negative impacts associated with their selection were too large to warrant further support. The Advisory Council concluded that the expressway alternates would cause the greatest number of farm homes and working structures to be displaced, the most harm to natural areas and preservation of the region's unique qualities, and the largest loss of tax revenue; while at the same time creating the most roadway ownership and maintenance burdens for local governments. Thus, the Advisory Council eliminated the expressway alternates from further consideration.

5.2.2.1 Advisory Council Recommendation of Preferred Alternate

After reviewing the remaining (freeway) alternates, the U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council, unanimously recommended that the Department advance Alternate 2, the Longhollow Freeway With the South Simmons Mound Variation as the locally-preferred alternative.

The Advisory Council concluded that Alternate 2 has the least negative impact on the environment including the preservation of endangered wildlife and habitat, that it best preserves prime and important farmland while minimizing additional adverse travel for farm vehicles and projected levels of incompatible traffic mixing, and best facilitates travel needs and market access for most local communities including Hanover, Elizabeth and Scales Mound.

The Advisory Council also concluded that Alternate 2 provides the best opportunity to keep development centered in the U.S. Route 20 corridor and to facilitate contiguous growth and development for adjacent communities. It has one fewer interchange and fewer bridges, lowering construction costs and other impacts, and it reinforces both the Jo Daviess County land-use plan (by avoiding ridgetop construction) and the Stephenson County land-use plan. In addition, Alternate 2 provides for the maximum use of existing U.S. Route 20 as part of the local road system and as a scenic route for travelers, preserving and facilitating the growth of tourism-related businesses. The Advisory Council noted that of all the freeway alternates, the Longhollow alternates, particularly Alternate 2, are the shortest, take the least amount of local tax resources and are the least costly.

The Advisory Council reinforced its recommendations to the Department with the strong mandate that mitigation of any negative impacts of Alternate 2 be given high priority. Further, the Advisory Council recommended that the Department assume responsibility for funding the cost of upgrading the local Elizabeth - Scales Mound Road between the Longhollow alignment and Elizabeth. The Advisory Council also recommended that the Department provide special signage along Alternate 2 for tourism features, design aesthetically pleasing highway features such as retaining walls and bridges and plant trees and vegetation to enhance the scenery of this beautiful part of the state.

Finally, the Advisory Council recommended that the Department continue to maintain existing U.S. Route 20 as a state highway and designate it as a scenic route, as well as assuring that a citizen advisory group continues to be involved and comment on the Department's design and

construction phases of the project. The Advisory Council praised the Department's public involvement effort and said that it had afforded all interested groups in the region the opportunity to voice their concerns and develop a workable compromise. The full Advisory Council Report is provided in Appendix G.

5.2.3 Communication Strategy

The Department's communication strategy utilized a customized mix of techniques and public involvement practices to: a) assure that the public would be involved in the environmental impact assessment process b) disseminate information and c) facilitate a two-way dialogue about issues and concerns. A range of techniques also was applied to give individuals a means to access information and participate in the dialogue at his or her own level of interest and availability.

5.2.3.1 Public Information Meetings

Open-house Public Information Meetings were held at critical times in the project study when the public at large could be given the opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary alignments and associated impacts. Typically, small groups (30± persons) would initially view an audio-visual presentation on study progress and findings and then move to other areas to review displays of maps and plans of the alternate locations to date. The Department and its consultant staff were available to assist the public with map and plan review and to answer questions.

At the initiation of the project study in 1993, the Department held an open house Public Information Meeting in which a general session was conducted to introduce the public to the goals and objectives of the project study. Then, citizens were asked to determine their strongest area of interest for the study and join a Work Group representing agriculture, economic development, environment, government or tourism. Each group was asked to identify three primary issues of concern for the study and select a chairperson and one other representative to the Advisory Council who would make recommendations on the alternates to the Department.

Public Information Meeting Dates

June 17, 1993, Stockton, IL
November 8, 1993, Lena, IL
November 9, 1993, Galena, IL
September 20, 1994, Freeport, IL
September 21, 1994, Galena, IL
February 23, 1999, Lena, IL
June 29, 1999, Galena, IL

5.2.3.2 Work Group Meetings

Each Work Group met periodically throughout the study in open and publicized meetings to review the Department's technical data relating to its area of interest and to formulate values regarding the potential impacts of the alternates. Work Groups also identified areas of further

investigation needed to supplement the Department's technical data. For example, the Economic Development and Tourism Work Groups both conducted surveys of business owners on the impact of bypasses and on each alternate's effect on customer visitation.

The Environment Work Group provided fog occurrence data along alternates as well as locally known biological resource information. The Government Work Group conducted a study of current and future land-use plans and emergency service routes in both counties and the impacts of each alternate. The Agriculture Work Group held extensive meetings with farmers and the Department's environmental and engineering consultants to review alternate locations and give input to the Department on the impacts of farm splitting, access road location and isolated land parcels.

Each Work Group had a consultant who served as a facilitator to assist in obtaining information and data for review and to assist in completing data analysis. Work Group officers conducted meetings and set agendas. Work Group members initially designed operating rules and bylaws calling for individuals to be voting members of just one Work Group and to attend several successive meetings prior to voting on issues. A question and answer session for the public was held at the conclusion of each Work Group meeting.

Near the conclusion of the project study, each Work Group held open and publicized subcommittee working sessions to produce a matrix of data and values analyses on critical areas of impact for each alignment and an alternate preference score for each alignment. This analysis allowed Work Groups to list alternates in order of the least impact on each interest area, and to provide the Advisory Council the basis for formulating a regional perspective on which alternate(s) would best serve northwest Illinois.

Work Group	Number of Work Group Meetings
Agriculture	15
Economic Development	15
Environment	34
Government	12
Tourism	20
Total	96

5.2.3.3 Joint Work Group Meetings

As the study progressed, the Department and its consultants completed a series of environmental technical studies which provided data for the Work Groups to determine impacts. So that all Work Groups would obtain information simultaneously, the Department held open and publicized Joint Work Group meetings. Meetings were conducted by Work Group officers, often by the Chairperson of the Work Group whose interest area was most closely aligned with each technical study.

The Department and its consultants made presentations regarding the findings of the technical studies and answered questions from Work Group members and the public. The project Public Affairs Manager and Public Involvement Coordinator (consultants) facilitated the meetings.

Question cards were used in a format similar to that used by the League of Women Voters to streamline audience participation and avoid duplicate questions.

Occasionally the Joint Work Group format also was utilized to 1) present the results of Work Group studies 2) allow varying interests to address general issues of concern such as the difference between a freeway and an expressway in serving the region and 3) allow Work Group members and the public to direct questions to the Department and its consultants involved in the project study.

Joint Work Group Meeting Dates

September 20, 1993, Elizabeth, IL
February 17, 1994, Elizabeth, IL
July 6, 1994, Lena, IL
February 23, 1995, Galena, IL
December 9, 1995, Stockton, IL
October 2, 1996, Galena, IL

5.2.3.4 Advisory Council Meetings

Each Work Group Chair and one other representative of each Work Group comprised a 10-member Advisory Council to provide a regional perspective to the Department on which alignment(s) would best serve northwest Illinois. The Advisory Council held open and publicized formal meetings in which all Work Groups reported study progress, gave input needed by the Department or its consultants on various project study issues and formed consensus on a consistent format for all Work Group studies and conclusions. Initially, the Department's District 2 Engineer served as a non-voting Chairperson. The Advisory Council selected a spokesperson from among its members to speak publicly on their behalf. As the project study progressed, this spokesperson assumed the duties of the chairperson.

Later in the project study, the Advisory Council held open and publicized working sessions in which members developed consistent formats for the Work Groups and the Council to present their analysis of impacts. No business was conducted and no the Department staff attended these meetings. At the conclusion of the project study, the Advisory Council held a formal public meeting at which each Work Group presented its findings on the impacts of each alignment.

The Advisory Council then held a workshop for its members to synthesize their own findings on regional impacts. This workshop was facilitated by the consultant Public Affairs Manager and Public Involvement Coordinator. A final, formal Advisory Council meeting was held for members to present to the Department and the public the Advisory Council's recommendations on which alignment(s) would best serve the region. The Advisory Council's recommendations to the Department are included in Appendix G.

Advisory Council Formal Meetings

October 13, 1993, Elizabeth, IL
March 14, 1994, Elizabeth, IL
August 25, 1994, Freeport, IL
April 25, 1995, Lena, IL
November 19, 1996, Lena, IL
November 18, 1997, Elizabeth, IL
December 15, 1998, Lena, IL

Advisory Council Working Sessions

January 31, 1996, Galena, IL
March 27, 1996, Elizabeth, IL
April 29, 1996, Elizabeth, IL
May 29, 1996, Elizabeth, IL
May 27, 1998, Elizabeth, IL
June 25, 1998, Elizabeth, IL
February 2, 1999, Galena, IL

December 14, 1999, Elizabeth, IL
May 10, 2001, Elizabeth, IL
July 26, 2001, Elizabeth, IL
September 6, 2001, Lena, IL
August 11, 2001, Galena Territory

March 9, 1999, Freeport, IL
April 1, 1999, Stockton, IL
May 5, 1999, Elizabeth, IL
June 3, 1999, Elizabeth, IL

5.2.3.5 Individual and Small Group IDOT Meetings

Throughout the project study, meetings with the Department and its consultants were requested by citizens in the region. Most often these meetings were concerned with the alignment locations in relation to an individual's own property and potential impacts. Meetings with small groups of individuals and special interest groups were held also at the Department office in Dixon, IL, and at individual residents' homes when requested.

These small group meetings sometimes focused on broader issues of concern such as the requested use of variations from standards to allow a specific alignment location to be utilized, the preservation of local forestland resources versus the use of acreage in Tapley Woods natural area or the feasibility of constructing a four-lane expressway on the existing two-lane alignment.

The Department also held several tours of the study corridor for state legislators and local officials in order to familiarize them with the alignment locations and shifts that were being made throughout the study to accommodate various interests and concerns.

5.2.3.6 Public Hearings

Two formal public hearings will be held upon completion and distribution of the DEIS. The hearings will utilize the open-house format for the public to review and comment on the document. The Department will conduct the public hearings pursuant to the guidelines contained in Chapter 19-3.02(C) of the Department's Bureau of Design and Environment Manual. The open-house format offers the public an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Department at a time and place which is reasonably convenient to discuss a proposed project. Throughout the open house sessions, appropriate members of the Department staff and its consultants will be available to discuss the project with the public and answer questions.

The open house format has been selected for the proposed project because of the following:

- It provides an informal setting which allows for responding to individual questions that may not be of general interest.

- It is responsive to the public at the grass roots level and does not depend upon assessments of public opinion by elected officials or other recognized leaders.

- Due to the hours of operation, an open house is available at convenient times for those who are interested.

- The absence of possible pressure or intimidation from groups of neighbors tends to motivate individual participation.

- An open house is effective for obtaining information from where there are no established leaders or officials in the affected neighborhood or community.

One hearing will be held in Jo Daviess County and one in Stephenson County. An audio-visual presentation will be provided to highlight the DEIS findings. The audio-visual presentation will also provide a brief overview of the studied alternates and the Department's Preferred Alternate (Alternate 2), taking into account Work Group, Advisory Council and general citizen input. The Department and its consultant staff will be stationed at map displays and exhibits which will depict the alternates and their evaluated conditions.

A court reporter will record oral public comments. Public comments will be accepted 30 days before and 15 days after the public hearings. Information received during the public comment period will be incorporated into the Final EIS.

5.2.3.7 U.S. Route 20 Newsletter and Citizen's Guide

A U.S. Route 20 newsletter was produced periodically throughout the project study and sent to a mailing list of approximately 2,650 individuals including Work Group members. The newsletter, titled *Glacier Shadow Pass Newsletter, Public Involvement Program*, was published prior to several of the public information meetings to make the public aware of new project study data, alignment locations, Work Group and Advisory Council study progress and the outcome of issues discussion.

The newsletter also was published periodically between large public information meetings to update residents on study progress. It was mailed to individuals and was also made available at information depositories throughout the two counties. A standard front page column was devoted to the names and community of residence locations of Work Group officers and the toll-free 800-number so that individuals could contact them directly with questions about Work Group and Advisory Council studies. Copies of the newsletters are provided in Appendix H.

Glacier Shadow Pass
Newsletter Publication Dates:

January 1994	October 1996
September 1994	April 1998
April 1995	May 1999
November 1995	May 2001

A 14-page U.S. Route 20 Citizen's Guide for Public Involvement, subtitled *Glacier Shadow Pass - In the Shadow of the Glacier*, was published at project study initiation. It outlined the history of four-lane highway discussion in the region, the purpose and need for a four-lane highway, engineering design and environmental impact study and proposed the Work Group and Advisory Council structure for issues and impact discussion.

The Citizen's Guide also defined a theme for the project study*, Glacier Shadow Pass*, to focus the attention of the public on the unique natural resources in the region for a planning process which would call on them to develop a values system from which choices could be made between competing interests. A copy of the Citizen's Guide is provided in Appendix H.

5.2.3.8 Information Depositories

The Department established information repositories and kiosks in communities throughout Jo Daviess and Stephenson Counties so those residents not already on the U.S. Route 20 mailing list could learn about the study process. Free-standing kiosks were located in the lobby of the U.S. Post Office buildings in Freeport, Lena, Warren, Stockton, and Galena. The libraries in Stockton, Elizabeth and Galena also served as information repositories.

Newsletters were placed in a kiosk at these locations as were press releases of meeting announcements. The Citizens Guide was placed in the kiosk as well as question and return address cards which citizens could mail to the Department via a slot in the kiosk. Thus, individuals could communicate with the Department, receive answers to their questions and have their names placed on the U.S. Route 20 mailing list.

5.2.3.9 Correspondence & Petitions

The Department received numerous letters from citizens requesting specific information regarding alignment location and their own property. The Department and the consultants responded to each inquiry. In addition, the Department received numerous petitions in the form of resolutions from local community and county governing bodies supporting the construction of a four-lane U.S. Route 20 highway in the region.
The following is a list of organizations which sent petitions to the Department and the Governor. In addition, a number of individual citizens (not listed) filed letters of support with the Department.

<u>IDOT Petitioners - Resolutions of Support for a Four-Lane Highway</u>:

Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation & Development Council
Dixon Industrial Development Association
Dubuque, IA, Area Chamber of Commerce
City of Galena
Galena Downtown Business Association
Galena/Jo Daviess County Chamber of Commerce
Greater Rockford Airport Authority
Freeport City Council
IL Association of Resource Conservation & Development Areas
IL Representative Dick Mulcahey, Davis, IL
  Petition to Governor, 13,000 signatures, 1985
JD/S Four-Lane 20 Association
Jo Daviess County Board
Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau
Lena Business & Professional Association
M & W Feed Service Ltd
North Central Region of Resource Conservation & Development Association (7 Midwest states)
Ogle County Overall Economic Development Program
Pete Peterson & Associates, Galena, IL
Schamberger Truck Service, Stockton, IL
Service Corporation of Retired Executives (SCORE)
State Senator Todd Sieben, 37th District
Stephenson County Board
Stephenson County Farm Bureau
Village of Lena
Village of Pearl City
Village of Stockton

Werhane Enterprises Ltd., Lena, IL
Whiteside County Board

In addition, the local Congressman and a State Representative have expressed support for a four-lane highway throughout the project study. The Department also received a number of letters in opposition to a four-lane highway or a particular alternate, primarily from individual citizens.

5.2.3.10 Public Opinion Survey

At project initiation, the Department conducted a statistically significant, random sample telephone survey of residents in Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties regarding the construction of a four-lane highway in the region. The survey showed that approximately 71 percent of residents in the two counties support the construction of a four-lane highway. This survey was conducted at the beginning of the public involvement process in 1993.

The Department had originally intended to repeat the survey after the public involvement process was completed, but found that the Work Group, Advisory Council and Public Information Meetings provided sufficient feedback on public opinion regarding a four-lane highway in the region. Agreement was ultimately reached midway through the project study by communities and special interest groups as well as the Work Groups and Advisory Council that a four-lane highway is needed in the region.

5.2.3.11 News Media Interface

The Department carried out extensive communication with the news media throughout the project study to help assure that citizens in Jo Daviess and Stephenson Counties would understand and be able to participate in the engineering design and environmental impact assessment process. Press releases announcing all public meetings were distributed to all regional news media approximately two weeks in advance. A public notice advertisement also was placed in the *Freeport Journal Standard* and the *Galena Gazette* for the Public Information Meetings. Copies of the public notices are provided in Appendix H.

Personal contact with reporters was initiated by the project Public Involvement Coordinator to stimulate interest in meeting coverage and issues delineation for in-depth articles. A news and feature clip file was maintained throughout the study process showing extensive news media coverage and of all project issues. Several series of issue-oriented articles were run by the *Freeport Journal Standard* and the *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*. The Department and its consultant staff were immediately accessible by phone for interviews.

Editorial board meetings were held with the publisher and editor of the *Freeport Journal Standard* and included the Public Affairs Manager, Public Involvement Coordinator and the Advisory Council spokesperson to promote news media understanding of project issues. At project initiation and during the study, highly complimentary editorials regarding the Department's efforts to involve the public in the planning process were run by editors of the *Freeport Journal Standard*.

The *Journal-Standard's* editors also published an editorial in August 1995 in favor of building a four-lane freeway in the region. Editors of the *Dubuque Telegraph Herald* conducted a survey in January 1995 posing the following question in the newspaper for readers to respond to: Should U.S. Route 20 be reconstructed as a four-lane highway throughout Jo Daviess County, IL? A total of 120 responses were received, with 84 percent responding yes and 16 percent

responding no. Later in January 1995 editors published an editorial in favor of building a four-lane highway in Jo Daviess County.

At the conclusion of the study, the following newspapers provided detailed news articles on the Advisory Council recommendation and the Department's recommendation: Dubuque Telegraph-Herald, Freeport Journal-Standard, Galena Gazette and the Rockford Register Star. In addition, highly complimentary newspaper editorials commending the Department and the citizens of Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties were published by the Rockford Register Star.

The following newspapers and broadcast outlets, among others, ran articles and news items on the U.S. Route 20 four-lane project study:

Chicago, IL
Chicago Tribune
Dubuque, Iowa
Dubuque Telegraph Herald
KDTH Radio
East Dubuque, IL
East Dubuque Register
Galena, IL
Galena Gazette
WFPS Radio
Freeport, IL
Freeport Journal Standard
Rockford, IL
Rockford Register Star
WIFR-TV Channel 23
Northwest Illinois Farmer Magazine

5.2.3.12 Toll-Free Telephone Number

The Department established an 800 toll-free telephone number, 1-800-837-RT20, so that citizens could call anytime for information on the project study. A recorded message listed up-coming meetings and contacts for specific information. Callers could also talk to a staff person regarding other more specific issues and concerns.

Throughout the project study, hundreds of calls were received at the Department's consultant office in Chicago. Calls in which a discussion with a staff person took place were followed up with a letter thanking the person for the contact and outlining follow-up action to be taken by the Department and/or its consultant.